News release

19 June 2007

Met Office forecasts Atlantic tropical storm season

The Met Office has today released its Atlantic tropical storm frequency forecast for the 2007 season.

Ten tropical storms are predicted as the most likely number to occur in the North Atlantic during the July to November period, with a 70% chance that the number will be in the range seven to 13. This represents below-normal activity relative to the 1990-2005 long-term average of 12.4.

This unique Met Office forecast, the only one in the world produced using global climate models, has proven to provide unparalleled accuracy and advice in trials during 2005 and 2006. In both these years the Met Office forecast outperformed more-traditional methods based on historical analysis alone.

Matt Huddleston, Met Office Principal Consultant on climate change says: "The Met Office forecast has already demonstrated its unparalleled skill over previous seasons, successfully predicting the change from the exceptionally active Atlantic season of 2005 to the below-normal season of 2006. This marked difference between seasons was missed by a number of statistical prediction methods, which have traditionally formed the basis of most published forecasts."

Rob Varley, Head of the Public Weather Service says: "The Met Office has been providing seasonal forecasts for the UK successfully for several years and the tropical storm forecast is the next step. The development of the tropical storm forecast will help the UK government protect the interests of its citizens and businesses abroad."

The tropical storm frequency forecast is derived using the Met Office's world-leading climate prediction model, taking into account the impacts of the ocean and atmosphere on the forecast for the next six months. This groundbreaking forecasting method allows us to produce a risk-based forecast for the coming tropical storm season.

The Met Office has the scientific expertise and technological capability to forecast tropical storms and hurricanes ranging from individual short-range track and landfall projections through to activity on a seasonal timescale.

North Atlantic tropical storms forecast

Notes to editors:

- The Met Office Public Weather Service is supporting a basic tropical storm frequency forecast for the Atlantic's June-November season.
- The forecast is for the five full months remaining in the June-November Atlantic tropical storm season. There have already been two named storms – Andrea and Barry.
- Tropical storms represent significant risk to the insurance, energy and finance markets. In 2005, Lloyds estimated its losses to be £2.9 billion as a result of the three biggest hurricanes in the Atlantic season alone. The impact of Hurricane Katrina on oil and gas production was hugely significant for UK and global markets.
- The Met Office's short-range weather model gives some of the best advice on hurricane track and landfall. It forecast the landfall of Katrina a full 12 hours ahead of any other model and track errors have decreased year on year.

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